



Director of Children's Services: Helen Budge

Children's Services

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All Parents and Carers

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Our Ref: HB/RC/kk/H30/C-19/Cor/030

Date: 15 April 2022

Your Ref:

Dear Parents and Carers

Information to all Parents and Carers:

COVID-19 mitigations, measures and changes in schools and early learning and childcare settings, start of term four, Tuesday 19 April 2022

I hope your children are enjoying their Easter holidays and I look forward to them returning to their school or early learning and childcare setting next Tuesday, 19 April 2022.

Ahead of settings reopening, I write with the most up-to-date position on COVID-19 mitigations in education settings, including some changes for you to note for the start of the new term, in line with updated Scottish Government guidance.

1. The use of face coverings

The Scottish Government continues to encourage the use of face coverings by all staff and young people in secondary settings, and by all staff in primary schools and early learning and childcare, in indoor communal areas, and when moving around school buildings, although it is no longer mandatory to wear a face covering in communal areas or when moving around school buildings.

Thus, secondary aged learners are encouraged to bring a face covering to school.

Whilst face coverings are no longer required to be worn in classrooms either, including for children and young people sitting exams, children and young people and staff should be supported to wear them if they choose to do so.

Face coverings should also continue to be worn by parents and carers and other visitors to the school site (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop-off and pick-up points.

It is the responsibility of secondary aged children and young people to bring a face covering to school and the availability of face coverings from schools will be phased out this term.

2. COVID-19 mitigations

The following measures will continue at the start of the new term:

- The use of hand sanitisers throughout the school day;
- Daily hand sanitisation for all children and young people on arrival at school;
- Enhanced daily cleaning during the school day, as far as is practicable, and further cleaning undertaken daily at the end of each day; and
- Ongoing careful monitoring to ensure the appropriate level of ventilation and adequate air flow throughout the building with CO2 monitors deployed, monitoring the level of CO2, and temperature in classrooms.

3. Testing, self-isolation requirements and positive cases in settings

From the 18 April 2022, asymptomatic school and early learning and childcare staff and secondary pupils will no longer be advised to test regularly with lateral flow tests.

However, the current self-isolation requirements will continue until the end of April 2022.

We will write to you at the end of April to clarify more changes to testing and self-isolation when all routine population wide testing and contact tracing is due to end and the general public will no longer be advised to seek a test if they are symptomatic. At that stage, it is expected we will move instead to general public health guidance to stay at home if unwell.

Schools will no longer issue low risk contact letters to their parents and carers from the start of term four if there are COVID-19 cases affecting classes or year groups.

However, please be reassured that Children's Services will continue to liaise closely with Head Teachers and Public Health in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak situation in any of our settings.

4. Parents' evenings and other forms of events with parents and carers

I appreciate how challenging the last two years have been for parents and carers with very limited opportunities to visit their children's school or early learning and childcare setting in person and meet with staff. School and early learning and childcare settings have attempted to engage with parents and carers in different ways, including online parents' evenings and information evenings.

As a general principle, in Shetland, the suspension of face-to-face parents' evenings will be lifted at the start of term four, as per the Scottish Government guidance. It will also be possible for parents and carers to attend other events in settings such as information evenings, learner led events, fundraising and family learning activities. Parents and carers will also be able to attend sporting and cultural events in schools and early learning and childcare settings.

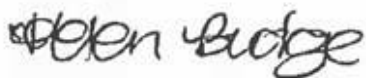
However, with the continued prevalence of the virus in Shetland, we are taking a careful, well planned, fully risk assessed and proportionate approach to parents, carers and wider family members entering school and early learning and childcare buildings.

Your setting will keep in touch with you about any parents' evenings and other events and activities and events, involving parents and carers that are planned for the term ahead.

Finally, thank you again for your ongoing support over the last two years and I wish everyone all the very best for the new term.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this letter, please contact your setting's Head Teacher or Manager in the first instance. I will also continue to update you on any further changes in respect of COVID-19 mitigations and the general COVID-19 context as the term progresses.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Budge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circular mark at the beginning.

Helen Budge
Director of Children's Services